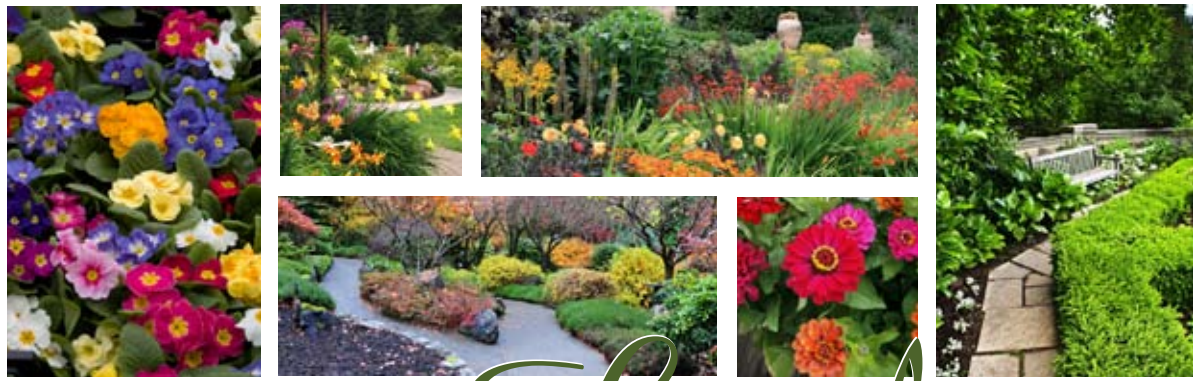


THE GROWING COMPANY^{INC.}

Proactive care for commercial landscapes



JANUARY 2010

Turn Over A New Leaf

Hot Topics for 2010

- ✓ **Vacancy/Leasing** – Vacancy rates are extremely high in Northern California. Property owners and managers must present/maintain an attractive exterior and interior condition of their property to retain and draw tenants.
- ✓ **Water Conservation** – Irrigation systems can be updated to new technologies such as weather based controllers, low volume nozzles, and netafim drip systems. The overall goal is to achieve the most efficient usage of water possible.
- ✓ **Cost Savings** – In these economic times, landscape contractors need to be as efficient as possible in providing their services. We look for ways to value engineer our services to achieve a cost effective solution for our clients.
- ✓ **Green Practices** – Sustainable practices such as mulching mowers, low decibel blowers, recycling waste, planting trees, and saving water have become standard practices. The Growing Company is LEED accredited and can assist clients in acquiring their certification.



Fruit Control

Fruit control is primarily applied in Northern California's commercial landscapes to flowering plum, pear and liquid ambar trees. It's very effective in preventing undesirable fruits from forming on landscape trees/shrubs. Sprayed onto the entire tree during the blooming period will cause the blooms to fall off, thereby preventing any fruit from forming. Applications should be done when most of the blooms are open and this is dictated by temperatures and weather conditions. Typically two or three applications are necessary depending upon the rate of blooming.

PreEmergent

Landscape maintenance usually requires attentive weed control. One of the most effective ways to control weeds is to apply a pre-emergent herbicide. Pre-emergent herbicide prevents weeds from germinating by forming a chemical barrier on the ground surface. This chemical controls a variety of annual broadleaf and annual grass weeds such as crab grass, clover, spurge, and dandelions. Pre-emergent is applied twice a year to prevent both winter weeds and summer weeds. Weed germination usually occurs when soil temperatures stay above 50 degrees, pre-emergent needs to be applied prior to that to make sure the chemical barrier is in place before weed germination starts.

Merit

Merit applications are used on trees such as crape myrtle, hackberry, pin oak, white birch and flowering plum to prevent aphid infestation. Merit applications are injected into the soil around trees and shrubs during January and February. Merit injections are a cost effective and environmentally friendly method for controlling aphids because the application last for approximately one year. The main alternative to merit injections is spraying the trees with an insecticide that is more expensive, less effective, and can be a logistical challenge. If not treated, the common side effect is a waxy residue/sap that drips onto cars and grounds and is transferred into the buildings by foot traffic. Also, infestations can distort leaf growth and appearance, taking away from the beauty of your plants and trees.



Bug of the Month

Often called ladybugs, lady beetles are the most familiar insect predator. Most adult lady beetles are round to oval, brightly colored and often spotted. The immature or larvae stages, however, look very different and often are overlooked or misidentified. Lady beetle larvae are elongated, usually dark colored, and flecked with orange or yellow. Most ladybug adults and larvae feed on aphids and other soft-bodied insects. Adults are attracted to flower nectar and pollen, which they must eat before they can reproduce. Nature has uniquely designed a warning system of colors. Red, yellow and black are colors that warn predators that the insect they are about to eat might not be a good lunch choice.